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WILLIAM PENN'S

EXHORTATION.

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WILLIAM PENN, in a Treatise entitled "The Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers," addresses to various classes of his readers, instructive advice on the subject of their everlasting welfare. Deeply sensible himself, of the unspeakable importance of closely attending to the light of Christ as revealed in the secret of the soul, he earnestly laboured to lead others to attend to and obey it, directing all to the Grace of God that bringeth salvation, teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

In his closing exhortation he thus addresses those who are yet strangers to that strait and narrow path in which he was led, and in which he experienced that "peace which passeth all understanding."

FRIENDS, as you are the sons and daughters of Adam, and my brethren after the flesh, often and earnest have been my desires and prayers to God on your behalf, that you may come to know your Creator to be your Redeemer and Restorer to the holy image that through sin you have lost, by the power and spirit of his son Jesus Christ, whom he hath given for the light and life of the world. And O that you, who are called Christians, would receive him into your hearts! For there it is you want him, and at that door he stands knocking that you might let him in, but you do not open to him: you are full of other

guests, so that a manger is his lot among you now, as well as of old. Yet you are full of profession, as were the Jews when he came among them, who knew him not, but rejected and evilly entreated him. So that if you come not to the possession and experience of what you profess, all your formality in religion will stand you in no stead in the day of God's judgment.

I beseech you ponder with yourselves your eternal condition, and see what title, what ground and foundation you have for your Christianity :—if more than a profession, and an historical belief of the Gospel. Have you known the baptism of fire, and the Holy Ghost, and the fan of Christ that winnows away the chaff in your minds, the carnal lusts and affections? That divine leaven of the kingdom, that, being received, leavens the whole lump of man, sanctifying him throughout in body, soul, and spirit? If this be not the ground of your confidence, you are in a miserable estate.

You will say, perhaps, that though you are sinners, and live in daily commission of sin, and are not sanctified, yet you have faith in Christ, who has borne the curse for you, and in him you are complete by faith, his righteousness being imputed to you.

But, my friends, let me entreat you not to deceive yourselves in so important a point, as is that of your immortal souls. If you have true faith in Christ, your faith will make you clean; it will sanctify you: for the saints' faith was their victory of old; by this they overcame sin within, and sinful men without. And if thou art in Christ, thou walkest not after the flesh, but after the spirit, whose fruits are manifest. Yea, thou art a new creature: new made, new fashioned, after God's will and mould. Old things are done away, and behold, all things are become new: new love, desires, will, affections, and practices. It is not any longer thou that livest, thou disobedient, carnal, worldly one; but it is Christ that liveth in thee; and to live is Christ, and to die is thy eternal gain: because thou art assured, that thy corruptible shall put on incorruption, and thy mortal immortality, and that thou hast a glorious house eternal in the heavens, that will never grow old or pass away. All this follows being in Christ, as heat follows fire and light the sun.

Therefore have a care how you presume to rely upon such a notion, as that you are in Christ, whilst in your old fallen nature: for what communion hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial? Hear what the beloved disciple tells you: If we say we have fellowship with God and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. That is, if we go on in a sinful way, are captivated by our carnal affections, and are not converted

o God, we walk in darkness, and cannot possibly in that state have any fellowship with God. Christ clothes them with his righteousness that receive his grace in their hearts, and deny themselves, and take up his cross daily, and follow him. Christ's righteousness makes men inwardly holy; of holy minds, wills, and practices. It is nevertheless Christ's, because we have it; for it is ours, not by nature, but by faith and adoption: it is the gift of God. But still, though not ours, as of or from ourselves, for in that sense it is Christ's, for it is of and from him; yet it is ours, and must be ours in possession, efficacy, and enjoyment, to do us any good; or Christ's righteousness will profit us nothing. It was after this manner that he was made, to the primitive Christians, righteousness, sanctification, justification, and redemption; and if ever you will have the comfort, kernel, and marrow; of the Christian religion, thus you must come to learn and obtain it.

The world talks of God, but what do they do? They pray for power, but reject the principle in which it is. If you would know God, and worship and serve God as you should do, you must come to the means he has ordained and given for that purpose. Some seek it in books, some in learned men; but what they look for is in themselves, though not of themselves, but they overlook it. The voice is too still, the seed too small, and the light shineth in darkness; they are abroad, and so cannot divide the spoil: but the woman that lost her silver, found it at home, after she had lighted her candle and swept her house. Do you so too, and you shall find what Pilate wanted to know, namely, *Truth*—truth in the inward parts, so valuable in the sight of God.

The light of Christ within, who is the light of the world, (and so a light to you, that tells you the truth of your condition,) leads all, that take heed unto it, out of darkness into God's marvellous light. For light grows upon the obedient: it is sown for the righteous, and their way is a shining light, that shines forth more and more to the perfect day.

Wherefore, O Friends, turn in, turn in, I beseech you: where is the poison, there is the antidote. There you want Christ, and there you must find him; and, blessed be God, there you may find him. Seek and you shall find, I testify for God. But then you must seek aright, with your whole heart, as men that seek for their lives, yea, for their eternal lives: diligently, humbly, patiently, as those that can taste no pleasure, comfort, or satisfaction, in anything else, unless you find him whom your souls want to know and love above all. O, it is a travail,

a *spiritual* travail ! let the carnal, profane world think and say as it will. And through this path you must walk to the city of God, that has eternal foundations, if ever you will come there.

Well, and what does this blessed light do for you ? Why, first, it sets all your sins in order before you : it detects the spirit of this world in all its baits and allurements, and shows how man came to fall from God, and the fallen estate he is in. Secondly, it begets a sense and sorrow, in such as believe in it, for this fearful lapse. You will then see him distinctly whom you have pierced, and all the blows and wounds you have given him by your disobedience, and how you have made him to serve with your sins ; and you will weep and mourn for it, and your sorrow will be a godly sorrow. Thirdly, after this it will bring you to the holy watch, to take care that you do so no more, and that the enemy surprise you not again. Then thoughts, as well as words and works, will come to judgment, which is the way of holiness, in which the redeemed of the Lord do walk. Here you will come to love God above all, and your neighbours as yourselves. Nothing hurts, nothing harms, nothing makes afraid, on this holy mountain. Now you come to be Christ's indeed ; for you are his in nature and spirit, and not your own. And when you are thus Christ's, then Christ is yours, and not before. And here communion with the Father and with the Son you will know, and the efficacy of the blood of cleansing, even the blood of Jesus Christ, that immaculate lamb, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel ; and which cleanseth from all sin the consciences of those that through the living faith come to be sprinkled with it from dead works to serve the living God.

Thus says one that God has long since mercifully favoured with his fatherly visitation, and who was not disobedient to the heavenly vision and call ; to whom the way of truth is more lovely and precious than ever, and that knowing the beauty and benefit of it above all worldly treasures, has chosen it for his chiefest joy ; and therefore recommends it to thy love and choice, because he is with great sincerity and affection,

Thy soul's friend,

WILLIAM PENN.